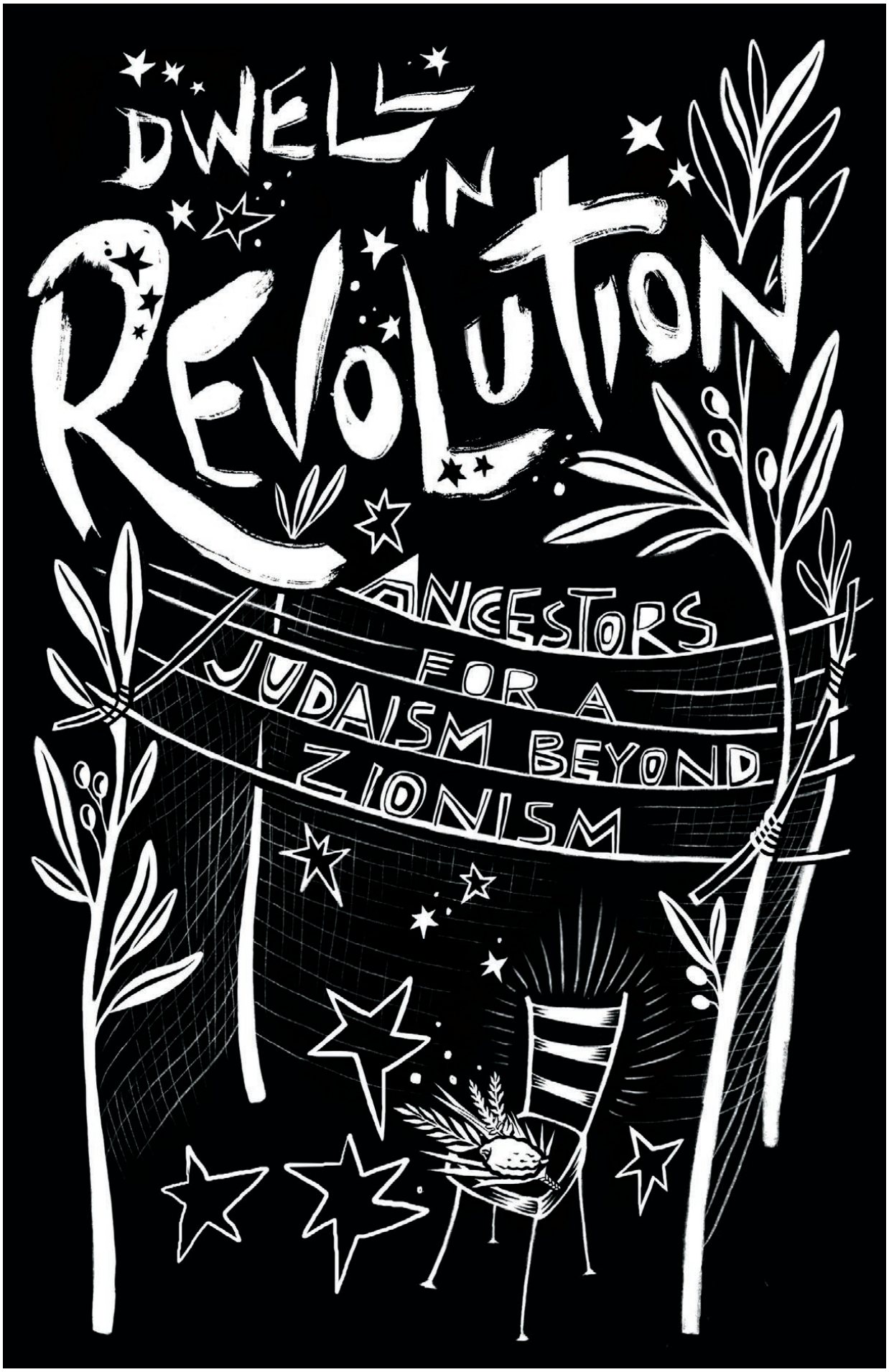
DWELL
IN
REVOLUTION
ANCESTORS
FOR A
JUDAISM BEYOND
ZIONISM

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## Dedication

✲ ✲ ✲

**To all our Anti-Zionist Ancestors —**
**because of you, we are.**

**May we remember that we are not**
**the first, nor will we be the last**
**Jews in the fight for a Free Palestine.**

## Introduction

We are living through the first Sukkot after Oct 7th, 2024 / 22 Tishrei 5784, after 76 years of ongoing Nakba. A year of acute genocidal decimation of Palestinian land and people. A year of Jewish communities fractured beyond recognition. A year in which the seeds of anti-Zionist resistance bloomed into global uprisings for Palestinian liberation. All year our president, rabbis, and families have force fed us the lie that there is no Judaism beyond a Zionist nation state. That our love of Jewish cultures, peoples and prayers is only possible if we cling to facism, fear, and denial. Our ancestors speak truth to these lies.

This project connects us through sacred practice to the longstanding thread of global anti-Zionist revolution in Jewish culture. To re/create a Judaism beyond borders, institutions, ashkenormativity, patriarchy and dogmatic observance. In the face of incalculable Palestinian suffering, we turn towards those who came before us, so that we may continue to show up and do everything in our power to end this Zionist genocide. After the High Holy days, Sukkot resources us through the ancient tradition of calling on our collective ancestral wisdom. We ask ancestors to dwell with us in the impermanence of climate chaos, mass extinction, viral epidemics, and the fall of capitalism, through this sacred technology of encampment, the Sukkah. May we remember, with the help of those who came before us, that we are not the first, nor will we be the last Jews to fight in solidarity for a free world, for a free Palestine!

## How do I use *Dwell in Revolution?*

**This zine** is intended to guide you through the nightly ancestor ritual that happens after sundown on all seven days of Sukkot. For each night of the holiday, the zine contains an array of access points, including art and writing about each ancestor, an adapted ritual and blessing to welcome them into your sukkah (pg. 7), and prompts to practice being in active conversation with ancestral wisdom (pg. 50).

**The 14 portraits** of anti-Zionist Jewish ancestors help us to remember our way forward. Hang the portraits up in your sukkah, downlaod and color the ancestor coloring pages (from bit.ly/dwell-coloring), or place the portraits in your sacred spaces beyond the holy days of Sukkot.

## What is Sukkot // סכות?

סכות // Sukkot means "[Festival of] Booths" and is one of the three "Pilgrimage Holidays" in the Jewish yearly cycle. In ancient temple times, a pilgrimage holy day called Jews on a voyage to Jerusalem. Journey is key to the potent symbolism of Sukkot. Travelers slept in booths on their way to the large markets outside the temple, where they stocked up on produce and grains for seasons to come. As a fall harvest holiday, Sukkot also evokes imagery of the temporary booths where people slept in the fields during long days of harvest, so they could work without journeying home. The harvest booths speak to a people moving in rhythm with the land, and in reverence to the unpredictability of crop harvest. As a holiday of liberation, Sukkot imagery evokes the booths where Irsaelites lived during their 40 years of wandering in the desert after enslavement. The mythical booths allude to the sheer precarity they endured in leaving מִצְרַיִם // *mitzrayim* // the narrow place on their journey to freedom.

Sukkot has always asked us to embody the politics of the encampment: a time to face precarity with the resilience of coalition building among the dead and the living, community and stranger. This Sukkot, as millions of Gazans are displaced from their fields and homes, into tents of survival and resistance, we recommit to fighting for their liberation and erect our tents in solidarity.

The Sukkot imagery of voyage, impermanence, and humble relationship to land is tied to one of the holidays' central mitzvot: הַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים // *hakhnasat orekhim* // hospitality to guests. It is written, "[you] know the soul of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt." (*Shemot*//Exodus 23:9) This hospitality is extended both to living guests, strangers to whom we offer accommodations, as well as אושפיזין/תא // *ushpizin/ata* // ancestral guests. The moment of Sukkot in Jewish time, following the heart-opening High Holy Days, calls on us to practice radical hospitality to humans and the more-than-human world. When we enter the sukkah, the "shade of faith" we do not enter alone; we bring our lineages with us. The commandment to dwell in the sukkah extends into the future and the past. Our ancestors are commanded to dwell with us, and we are commanded to call upon them.

## What are Ushpizin/ata // אושפיזין/תא ?

- *Language:* Aramaic
- *Root:* נשף // nun, shin, pey
- *Aramaic Gendering:* Ushpizin–M, Ushpizata–F
- *Literal translation:* Night's lodging, inn, innkeeper, host
- *Common translation:* visitor, guest

There is a mystical practice that comes from the book of Zohar, a kabbalistic text from 13th-century Spain, of calling in two Ushpizin/ata to dwell among us each of the seven nights of Sukkot. Traditionally, these ancestors were biblical forefathers (such as Abraham, Isaac, Aaron and Moses) and many people have added biblical foremothers (such as Sarah, Rachel, Rebecca and Leah). It is common to place visual art or photos of Ushpizin/ata in the sukkah, so the ancestors can visually dwell with us.

Today, leftist communities have expanded the Ushpizin/ata practice to welcome people outside the pages of Torah. Jews hang photos of movement leaders, or family members blood and chosen who are no longer in the material plane. In some Sephardic communities, it is customary to leave a chair with offerings and books for the Ushpizin/ata. Or to offer an "Ushpizin/ata share" of food as mutual aid to one's community during this time.

## About this project

**A Note on Historical Research:** To find ancestors capable of supporting us during this time of unraveling, we sourced knowledge from our movements, books, scholars, and living memory. We lift up these 14 ancestors not as idols, or upon pedestals, but rather as a prayer for continuity, for feeling their hands at our backs. While we cannot have a conversation with the ancestors in this project, we did our best to research and learn about them before including them. Before the state of Israel was created there was a different lexicon and politics surrounding Zionism. We believe it is important to honor Jews who were fighting for a world beyond borders and colonialism during political moments that preceded our own. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this project walks the line between the limits of history and the limitless power of claiming people as our kin. This imperfect zine was a labor of love created by many tired

and disabled organizers and artists in our volunteer time. Please email us at dwellinrevolution@gmail.com with any feedback. We welcome your knowledge and hope to learn about more ancestors thanks to you!

**Where does the money from this project go?** In the Sukkot spirit of radical hospitality and Sephardi practice of an "ushpizin/ata offering," 30% of all funds raised this year will go to Operation Olive Branch, a grassroots organization supporting survival in Gaza, Sudan and Congo. Funds also cover printing, shipping and small honorariums to contributors.

**Access Notes:** <u>If you don't have a sukkah:</u> Sukkot is about dwelling in impermanence, which takes many forms, both metamorphic and physical, and is centered on inviting guests. For this reason it is a *minhag*// custom to invite people into your sukkah and likewise to ask for a spot at someone's sukkah table. There are very specific Jewish laws that make something a kosher Sukkah (a temporary structure with 3 full walls, earthen material roof through which you can see three stars, etc), however people have adapted these traditions to meet the moment and observed Sukkot in many different ways throughout history. The Talmud discusses sukkot on boats, on the backs of camels, and formed out of trash. There are many ways to evoke the spirit of the sukkah and we encourage you to observe in a way that is accessible for you—on your apartment balcony, under a tree, or on a blanket in the park. If you are living in your bed or in the hospital at the moment, you can even open windows, hang סכך // *s'chach* // natural material that composes the roof of a sukkah above the bed, or bring in plants to call up the feelings of encampment and dwelling in the natural world.

**Observing the Holy Day // חג // *chag*:**
Because Sukkot is a Pilgrimage holiday, it falls under holy day observance rules, which are similar to Shabbat, in that there is no writing or use of technology. You will notice a "Letters to our ancestors" section (pg. 50) for each night of Sukkot. This is meant as a metaphoric invitation, and is not meant to ask those observing the holy day to break their customs.

**Connecting with the Dead:** Many people find it difficult to connect with those who are no longer living. You can still participate in Ushpizin/ata! This guide is an invitation into any level of connection or disconnection that you may feel. Reading the blessing, reading the

names of ancestors, or just extending gratitude that there are people who laid the path for you is דַּיֵּנוּ // *dayenu* // enough. Judaism has no fixed afterlife belief which allows for a lot of flexibility in how we interpret connecting with the dead. There are ancient traditions within Judaism that understand the afterlife alternately as resurrection of the dead (either literal or metaphoric), a heaven-like return to Eden, reincarnation, or total return to dust and ashes.

**A Note on G!d Language:** We honor the multitudes of Jewish secular, spiritual, and cultural traditions, and encourage you to interpret and adapt our language to suit your practice. In Judaism, there are as many names for the Divine as there are blessings for Her. The essence of הַשֵּׁם // *Hashem* // The Name is so vast that it can feel uncomfortable to encompass Them in one word. Nevertheless, as humans, naming connects us with our Source of Life. In Aramaic we refer to the power of words with the phrase: "we create the world as we speak" ("*abruq ad babra*" which in pop culture has become "Abra Kadabra").[1]

In the blessing section, many names are used for Shekinah (the manifestation of Divine presence here on earth). We invite you to revel in Zir many names as you move through this ritual, trying on what feels connective and resonant for you in the moment. In this text we have refrained from writing the "full" name of G!d. Our tradition does not prohibit us from writing the name of G!d, but it does prohibit erasing or defacing G!d's name, which is easy to accidentally do with a zine or printed paper.

## Gratitudes

Gratitude to Dr. Devin E. Naar, Professor of Sephardic Studies, without whom we would not have been able to recover history and images of Maurice Nessim. Deep thanks to Rabbi Elliot Kukla for offering rabbinical guidance on Hebrew translation and grammar, editing, and co-writing our Ushpizin/ata blessing adaptation. Big love to Lewis Raven Wallace for editing support, and Jordan Reznick and Allison Little for proofreading.

1 Adapted from *Nishmat Shoom High Holy Days Machzor* for *Pillar of Fire Haggadah*

# Seder Ushpizin/ata // סדר אושפיזין/את

***Ritual of Welcoming Ancestral Guests to the Sukkah***

✵ ✵ ✵

*Read the following paragraphs each evening once the sun has set fully and stars are visible.*

## כַּוָּנָה // *Kavanah* // Intention:

Behold we come here to fulfill the mitzvah to dwell in the sukkah, as commanded in the Torah: "Seven days you will dwell in sukkot for radical hospitality, so that your generations will know that I made the G!d wrestlers dwell in impermanence when I brought my people from the narrow place."

For the sake of uniting all forms of holiness, across time and space. We invite them to join us with all their imperfections and humanity, as we work to heal our lineages. I now invite to my meal, in the name of all who wrestle with *Havaya* (the Living Presence of the Divine) in solidarity with all those, past, present, and future who fight for a free Palestine, the exalted guests, ushipizin/ata.

## קבע // *Keva* // Structured Invocation:

*[Aramaic]*

| | |
|---|---|
| עוּלוּ אוּשְׁפִּיזִין עִלָּאִין קַדִּישִׁין | *Ulu Ushpizin Ila'in Kadishin* |
| עוּלוּ אִימָּהָתָא עִלָּאָתָא קַדִּישָׁתָא | *Ulu Imahata Ila'ata Kidashata* |
| עוּלוּ אֲבָהָן עִלָּאִין קַדִּישִׁין | *Ulu Avahan Ila'in Kadishin* |

*[Interpretation]*
Sit with me, sit with me, honored guests;
sit with us, sit with us holy guests;
come and dwell revolutionary guests.

Scan this code or go to bit.ly/3WTBh30 to hear a melody for this invocation from singer Yael Schonzeit.

### בְּרָכָה // *Bracha* // Blessing:

May it be Your will, Eternal One, Keeper of my ancestors, that You spread out over us your Sukkah of Divine peace and wholeness. May the presence of our brave anti-Zionist ancestors shelter us like an eagle protecting their nest. And from this moment may the great flow of life flow unto [our community/me] a new generation. As we leave the comfort of our houses to dwell in the sukkah, may we remember all who have been brutally displaced from their homes in Palestine in this ongoing Nakba. And may the revolutionary spirit of our ancestors help us feed the hungry, water the thirsty, protect the vulnerable, and be humble before the holy earth that sustains us all. Sitting here in our sukkah; may you hear us as you heard them, throughout the generations.

### Welcoming Ushpizin/ata Guests to the Sukkah by Name:

*The Kabbalah connects each of the seven nights of sukkot to one of the seven mystical qualities of the Divine, "the Sefirot". Below you will find two ancestors to call in each night, associated with that "sefirah".*

If You Please // בְּמָטֵי מִינָךְ בְּ // *B 'Mati Minach*

*[Night 1:]* חֶסֶד / *Chesed* / Compassion

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Shatzi, the People's Bubbie

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Come Leslie, Rock of our Hearts

*[Night 2:]* גְּבוּרָה / *Gevurah* / Discipline

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Maurice, La Boz del Pueblo

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Naeim, Witnessing Mountain

*[Night 3:]* תִּפְאֶרֶת / *Tiferet* / Harmony

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come, Salim, King of Shaabi

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Arna, Creator of the Freedom Theater

*[Night 4:]* נֶצַח / *Netzach* / Endurance

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Abraham & Evelyne, Revolutionary Militants
Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Alberto, Leader of the Anti-Imperial League

*[Night 5:]* הוֹד / *Hod* / Humility

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Marek, Guardian of the Jewish Graves
Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Moris, Comrade to the Imprisoned

*[Night 6:]* יְסוֹד / *Yesod* / Foundation

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Melanie, Mother of Radical Diasporism
Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Emma, A Voice Without Fear for Every Unpopular Cause

*[Night 7:]* מַלְכוּת / *Malchut* / Dignity

Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Roni, Poet of Insatiable Curiosity
Li'ul / לִיעוּל / Come Hedy, Daughter of Dreamers

*Don't forget to thank and release any and all ancestors that you welcome into the sukkah at the end of the holiday! Just as we welcome, we release as a sign of respect.*

# Night 1 ✡ חֶסֶד / *Chesed* / Compassion

Shatzi Weisberger & Leslie Feinberg

## The People's Bubbie, Shatzi Weisberger

**June 17, 1930 — December 1, 2022**

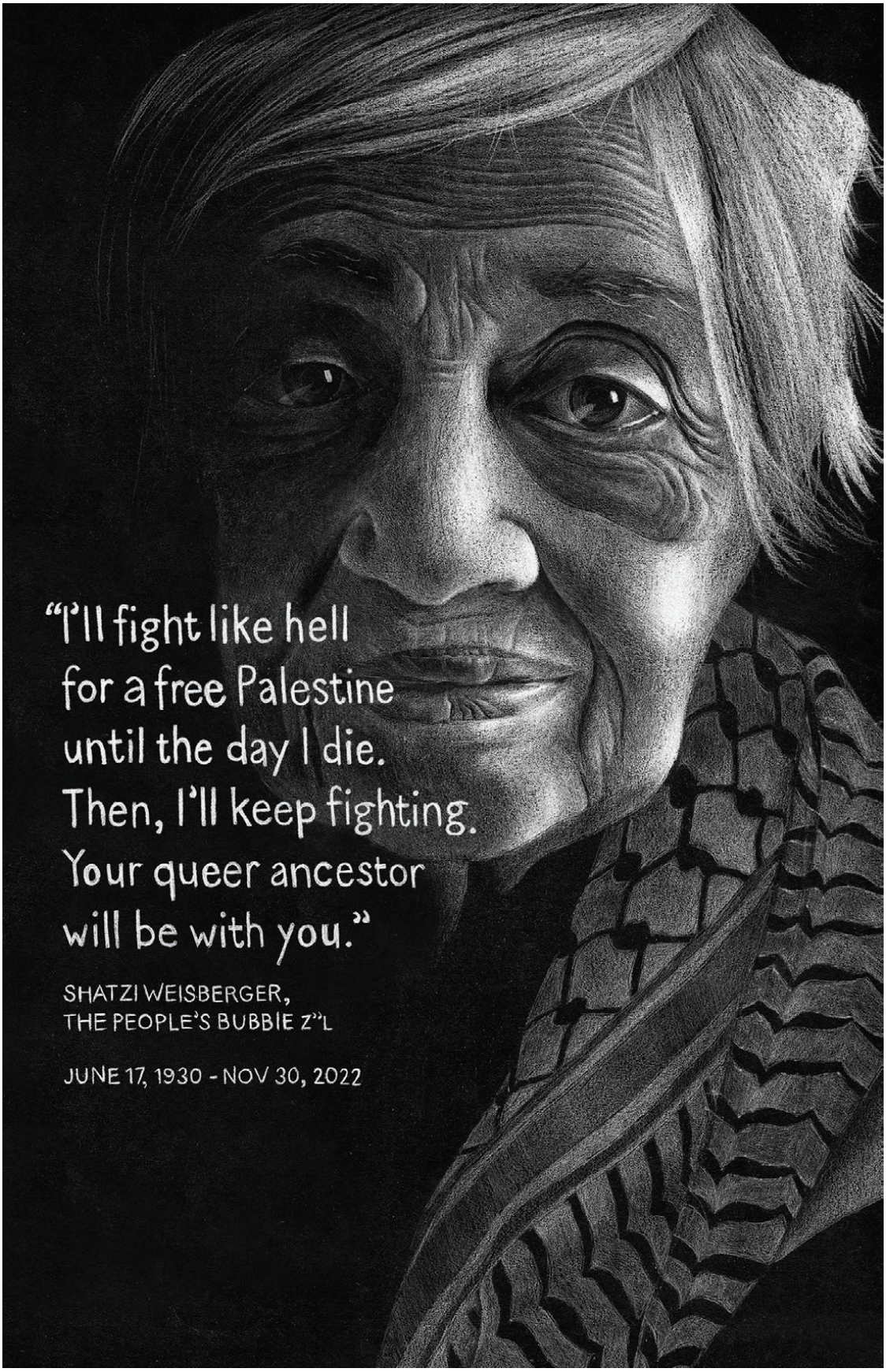
*By Jay Saper*

I found a folded up yellowing piece of paper tucked inside a book that Shatzi left behind for me. Punctured grooves and darkened blisters from a piece of matzo placed on a copy machine filled the background. Handwritten text on six-pointed stars welcomed all Jewish lesbians and daughters to the 1978 Lesbian Seder at the Women's Coffee House in Greenwich Village. A paper cutout of a cup of wine sat adjacent to a bottle of Womanischevitz.

Inspired by the invitation, I honored the first Passover since Shatzi's death by hosting the 46th Annual Lesbian Seder for her chosen family. We gathered together in a home where Shatzi had long organized for Palestinian liberation, just around the corner from where the Women's Coffee House once stood. I wove Shatzi's story throughout the haggodah I made, which centered the voices of queer and trans Jews who have always reimagined both our tradition and the world.

It is not easy holding the weight of transformation. While becoming ourselves is a beautiful journey, it is so often mixed with rupture, loss, and pain. Shatzi showed both those of us fortunate enough to know her personally, as well as all those who admired her from afar, that we are in fact possible. That we have queer anti-Zionist elders and ancestors at our back. That we are each other's family and we will always, just as we did at the seder that evening, welcome one another home.

Home wasn't always a welcoming place for Shatzi. Her father kidnapped her when she was five years old, after her mother May, who would later


"I'll fight like hell
for a free Palestine
until the day I die.
Then, I'll keep fighting.
Your queer ancestor
will be with you."
SHATZI WEISBERGER,
THE PEOPLE'S BUBBIE Z"L
JUNE 17, 1930 - NOV 30, 2022

*By Ray Packer* 10

serve as grand marshall of Pride, came out as a lesbian. Because of her father's pervasive homophobia, Shatzi grew up in the foster system. The indignities she experienced as a child inspired her to dedicate her life toward building a better world.

Shatzi began organizing against racist redlining practices on Long Island. She came to embrace her lesbian identity as political and agitated her community to take action. In the 1970s, Shatzi founded Radical Jewish Lesbians Organizing and Dykes Opposed to Nuclear Technology. She got arrested with the latter group, with the clever acronym DONT, leading a protest against the dangers of nuclear energy years before the nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island.

During the 1980s, Shatzi joined the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, known as ACT UP. She was a lifelong nurse, who made home visits to provide care throughout the height of the AIDS crisis. Shatzi was also a committed prison abolitionist who distributed one of the movement's first publications, *No More Cages*, on the sidewalks of New York City. Shatzi marched at Pride in 1986 with a pink triangle star of David adorned sign proudly above her head that read: Jews for Palestinian self-determination. For the latter part of her life, the anti-Zionist organization Jewish Voice for Peace became Shatzi's political home. At one demonstration she handed out challah while holding a sign that read: Jewish dyke standing with Palestinian queers.

Shatzi's lifelong commitment to her uncompromising, yet ever evolving, politics led her to become a global icon. She was a beloved presence at Dyke March each year and the oldest New Yorker during the historic 2020 Black Lives Matter uprisings to break the mayor's draconian curfew put in place to suppress the movement. Shatzi inspired generations of queer and trans anti-Zionist activists who lovingly embraced her as our movement's grandmother. The legacy of the legendary People's Bubbie lives on.

AND WITH EVERY BREATH AND EVERY SINEW
I FIGHT FOR PALESTINIAN LIBERATION
(2002 SPEECH AT AL-FATIHA RETREAT)
LESLIE FEINBERG

*By Nicki Green* 12

## HASTEN THE REVOLUTION!
## an incantation for leslie feinberg

*By Dori Midnight*

O fierce comrade! O outlaw! O rock of our hearts!
come in, drink deep, feast at our table, rock us to sleep
open us, widen us, fill us, ignite us!
hasten the revolution!

O lover! O fighter! O mountain! O mover!
blessed be your black t-shirt, your buckles, your leather straps
blessed be your fist raised in struggle and clenched in pleasure
blessed be the lush poetics of your revolutionary devotion
hasten the revolution!

O sick one! O generous worker! O butch of our dreams!
blessed be your call to action, the insistence of your flame
blessed be your passion, a deep love born from pain
blessed be your words, your light, your tears, your heart, your breath
blessed be your bones, your body, your rage, your life, your death
blessed be your memory, a bright legacy of resistance
and blessed be your last words spoken, an incantation to guide us:
hasten the revolution
hasten the revolution
hasten the revolution!

like those who came before us, eternally lit by persistent deviant desire,
we wait in the sukkah, palms open, eyes closed
we set the table as altar and place our offerings upon it:
wine, water, flame, braid, watermelon, spoons, keys, an empty bowl
a prayer to
hasten the revolution

oh my people! trust this: when we draw lace over our head at dusk,
when we invoke the undying light of our ancestors, we sing:
come beautiful comrades, come!
hasten the revolution!

I will never forget the first time I saw Leslie Feinberg speak. It was 1995, I was 19, and had just torn through *Stone Butch Blues*, only putting it down to weep or catch my breath. With the passion and rootedness of a tree on fire, ze spoke about queer and trans liberation from an anti-imperialist, anti-colonial position, about bodies and sex as sites of resistance, about femmes and class struggle, about solidarity and love. I sat in the third row and furiously wrote down notes in my journal: *book as a flag—a call to action, queer liberation in our bodies NOW* and *everything is connected—Israeli apartheid, silencing of AIDS crisis, local and global wars.* After the talk, I approached hir to say thank you, tears streaming down my face. Ze took one of my hands in hirs and placed hir other hand on my shoulder, looking me directly in the eyes. I felt like I was in the presence of a holy one—a radical, revolutionary, mind blowingly brilliant, trans face of the divine.

Leslie Feinberg was an anti-racist white, working-class, Jewish, trans thinker, writer, and activist. Ze is the author of *Stone Butch Blues*, *Transgender Warriors*, and *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink and Blue*. Hir commitment to and relentless fight for justice was rooted in hir own experiences of violence and oppression under capitalist heteropatriarchy and hir hearty solidarity with all movements against imperialism and settler colonialism. Feinberg was a fierce anti-zionist, active in organizing for Palestinian solidarity since the 1970s. Feinberg said, "I was born into a Jewish family of factory workers one year after al-Nakba. I am with Palestinian liberation with every breath in my body; every muscle and every sinew."

Leslie Feinberg became an ancestor on November 15, 2014 from complications from multiple tick-borne co-infections and lack of access to medical care after decades of illness. Ze died at home with hir partner and spouse of 22 years, Minnie Bruce Pratt, at hir side. Hir last words were, "Remember me as a revolutionary communist. Hasten the revolution!"

# Night 2 ✡ גְּבוּרָה / *Gevurah* / Discipline

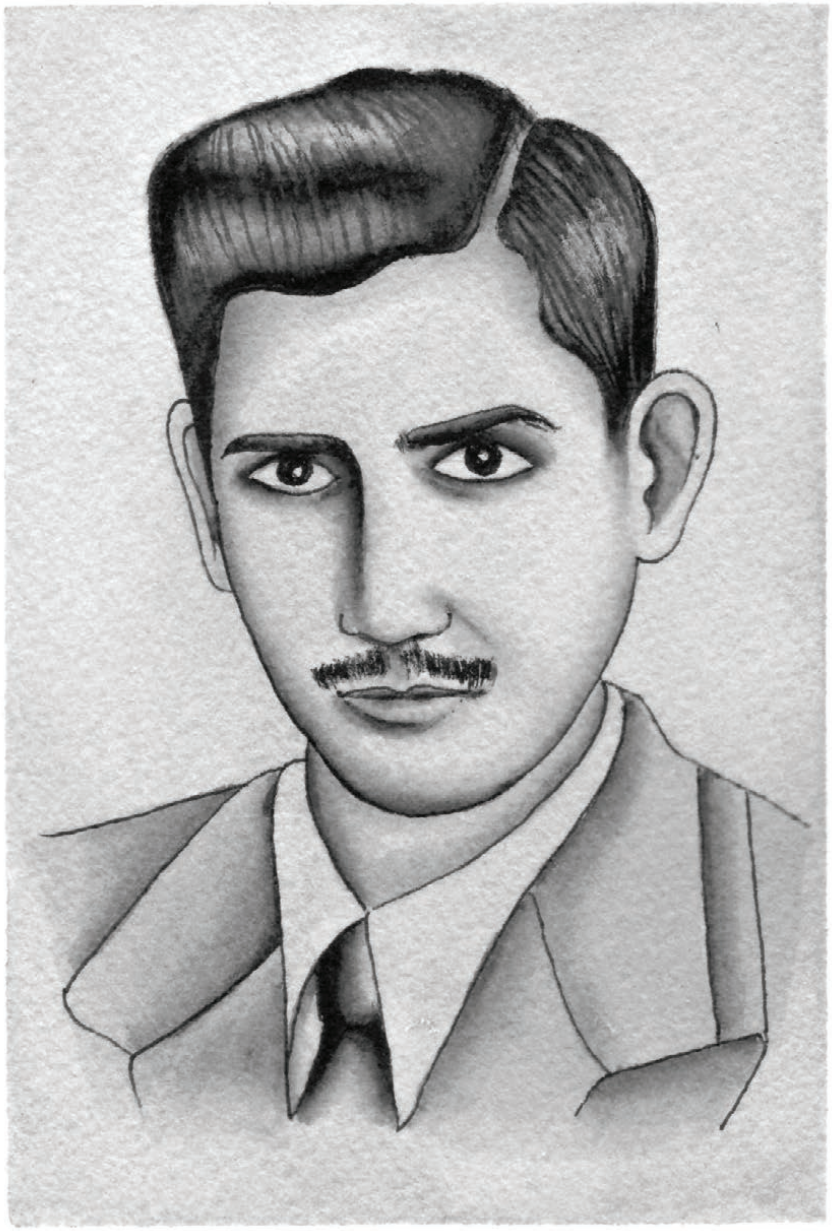
Naeim Giladi & Maurice Nessim

## Naeim Giladi

*By Sarit Cantor*

My name is Giladi—the witnessing mountain. My ancestors found their way to Iraq thousands of years ago, in a time before the limitations of language as we know it; a time of myrtle, oleander, capers, bloodflower; a time when we were guided by prophets and miracles. Back then, my name was Haroon. I come from a family lineage who lived in accordance with the Tigris and Euphrates rivers—listening, connected, changing course as needed. I come from a family lineage who lived in devotion to rice and dates and all that grew around them. The violence of colonization has known many faces, and with the movement of the Ottoman Empire my family was forced to rupture their relationship with land and began to make and sell gold bars. My family's name was changed to Khalaschi—the makers of purity. What can a colonizer possibly know of purity?

Still, the sacred connection with land felt alive within me and I felt called to try and seek it out. I joined the underground Zionist movement and in 1947, the Iraqi authorities caught me smuggling Jews out of the country, moving them to the lands I had been told were promised to me and my people. I was imprisoned for two years where I was tortured, brutalized, given a death sentence. The rivers, dates, rice, bloodflower, capers, oleander, myrtle all held me strong in my convictions and what I believed to be my faith in Zionism never wavered through it all. Miraculously, I escaped from captivity on my 18th birthday and fled to the new state of so-called Israel. At the border, the immigration guards changed my name once more. Klaski, they said, sounds more European, more Ashkenazi. You will have a better life here, they said, if we call you Klaski. What can the colonizer possibly know of a good life? As an Arab Jew, there were no jobs, no shelters, no food, no joys. I joined the Israeli army out of desperation where my job was to remove Palestinians from their homes through duress and violence, tearing them away from their



NAEIM GILADI

lands while they begged to give water to their orange trees one last time. We filled trucks full of families and dumped them mercilessly into Gaza. It became clear that Zionism's only interest in Arab Jews was for the cheap labour needed to remove any traces of Palestinian life. With disgust, rage, betrayal and a grief heavier than any mountain, I left the military and I named myself Giladi. Giladi, the one who has witnessed the mountains of trouble before him. Giladi, the one who remains unshakeable in his witnessing. Giladi, the one who will not look away.

Powered by the ancient ones, by my family's relationships with land that transcend borders, statehood, nation and empire, I began to organize with other Mizrahi Jews. We were demanding equal rights in a land that was supposed to be for everyone, shining light on the unthinkable atrocities and layered violences of the Zionist state. With my fellow Mizrahi and Arab Jews we formed what the state began to call the Israeli Black Panthers, unintentionally, but to our benefit linking us to the struggles of Black liberation in the United States, to struggles against racism, segregation, and colonial oppression. We fought and we fought hard, but how many massacres can one person witness in their lifetime? How many acts of terror must one endure before he begins to crumble? After decades of resistance work, I remembered the embrace of the Tigris and Euphrates, moved to the United States so that I might speak openly about the violence I was fighting against and I renounced my Israeli citizenship the very thing I was willing to die for as a young man.

May my story offer a blessing to each who reads it. May it be a blessing of permission to change your mind, remembering that it is never too late to change course in the face of injustice. May you feel forgiveness and compassion for every time you followed a broken roadmap. May the indoctrination you have been fed dissolve slowly back into the earth. May you remember that with nearly every encounter of belonging comes an othering of someone else. May my story soften this reality and uplift the shared burden and shared responsibility of belonging. May the struggles I encountered support you in loosening the colonizer's grip on your own story so that you may find your way back to the lands and the waters that are always waiting for you. May you feel my loving gaze at your back and mountains of justice on your side.

# Aiming at Every Sephardic Home: A Spell for Maurice Nessim

**Nessim Nissim נִסִּים Miracle ~ He became an ancestor in 1964**

*By Ollie Schwartz*

THE ONLY SPANISH-JEWISH JOURNAL OF INTEREST AIMING AT EVERY SEPHARDIC HOME
CIRCULATING IN NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA, EASTERN AS WELL AS WESTERN EUROPE
Advertise-ments inserted only for Honorable and Responsible Houses
לה בוז דיל פואיבלו
Subscription $1.00 A YEAR

"*The only Spanish-Jewish Journal of interest, aiming at every Sephardic home*"[2]

This is where diasporas meet[3]
Sinai at 235 Eldridge Street
Like Ezra the Scribe, quill to klaf
I, with my newsprint and letter blocks

Printing Aleph Bet in Ladino as our village crier,
twice weekly I publish black fire on white fire.
My Torah, a printing press, the "Jerusalem of the Balkans"[4]
These words, in 226 Issues[5], will outlive ashkenormative mocking[6]

---

2 Slogan of Nessim's newspaper, *La Boz Del Pueblo*

3 Phrase from the title of Aviva BenUr's piece "Where Diasporas Met: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews in the City of New York—A Study in Intra-Ethnic Relations" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1998).

4 A term for Salonika, Greece, where in the 16th century safe haven for Jews during the Inquisition resulted in a golden age of Jewish economy, rabbinic study, and a center of modern Hebrew publishing. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Salonica became a major commercial and industrial port, and the center of the largest Jewish and general workers organization in the Mediterranean, the Socialist Workers Federation of Salonica (est. 1909) of which Nessim was a member (it also included Muslim Turks, Greek Orthodox Christians, and Bulgarian Orthodox Christian's). It was this modern dynamic that led both Jabotinsky and Ben-Gurion to visit Salonica and declare its dynamic Jewish society as a model for an autonomous Jewish society they hoped would one day be built in Palestine. The region has had a continuous Jewish presence since the 1st century.

5 Nessim's press put out 226 issue total, 1000 pages, from 1915-1920.

6 Nessim published often about ashkenormative racism aimed at Sephardim living among Ashkenazi Jews in the shared social location of the Lower East Side of NYC.

I work as a proud trans-Mediterranean, anti-imperialist,
Blacklisted as "The Devil's Voice,"[7] against nationalists[8]
I stand boldly with *djuderia*[9], a *Selanikli*[10]
Go ahead, deport me, in the Red Scare and violence I will not assist.[11]

From *la patria* to L.E.S.[12], transnationalism is my birthright
So, why can't the *galuth*[13] see me reflected within their flight?
My people lived generations as *dhimmis* [14]
We cross the sea, a new start, under *el nuevo gerush*[15]

In you my dear friends, I see my legacy,
Thank you for spending this sukkot dwelling here with me.
From *El Progresso*, to *La Boz del Pueblo*, to *La Epoca*[16]
They water down our message, but our prophecy they can't block.

Let us dream together a world beyond borders
*Mi pueblo*[17], I am with you, my pages are your portals.

---

7 Words spoken by Moïse Gadol, Zionist editor of *La Amérika*.
8 Itamar Ben Ami (Ben Yehuda's son) gave a lecture in NYC around WWI about building up Jewish institutions in Palestine, including a military. Nessim publicly and loudly denounced him.
9 Ladino for "Jewry" as in "Jewish community or collectivity" also used as the term for the "Jewish quarter."
10 A person from Salonica, Greece, Nessim's birthplace. At the time part of the Ottoman Empire, it is known today as Thessaloniki in Greece.
11 Nessim was exiled in 1919 for his public anti-nationalist and communist organizing, and moved to France.
12 "la patria" is how *Selaniklis* referred to their home country in Greece. L.E.S. abbreviates Lower East Side
13 Hebrew word for "exile", used by Ashkenazim, here written in Hebrew, rather than yiddish, to represent the tension between Ashkenazi and Sephardic pronunciation
14 A term for the legal protection afforded to non-Muslim people living under an Islamic state. "Protected person" in Arabic, this status existed until the 1840s. After this point, under the Ottoman nationality law of 1869, and revitalized in the constitution in 1908, *dhimmi* status was abolished and formally replaced with citizenship for all, mirroring European policy of the time. The Socialist Federation (see footnote 3) keenly promoted a multinational conception of Ottoman citizenship.
15 Ladino for "the new expulsion," referring to the wave of Balkan immigrants to the U.S. under Greek rule, from 1913 to 1916, of which Nessim was a part
16 These are the three name changes his newspaper went through over time due to political pressure.
17 Ladino for "my people".

*By Rose Jaffe* 20

# Night 3 ✡ תִּפְאֶרֶת / *Tiferet* / Harmony

Arna Mer-Khamis & Salim Halali

## Arna Mer-Khamis

*By Julia Peck*

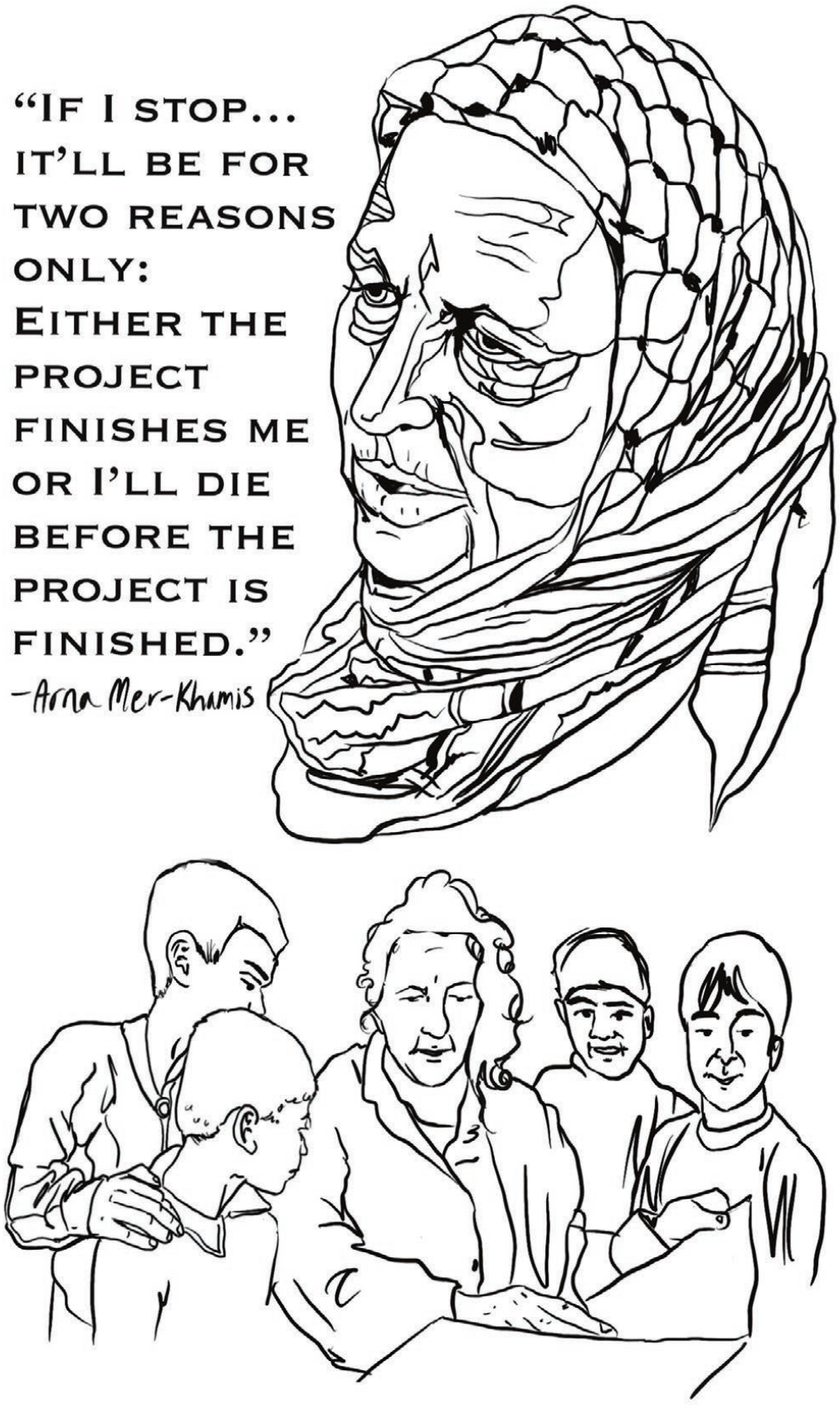
*Scene: Early 1990s. Arna Mer-Khamis wears a keffiyeh to protect the skin of her head, smooth and hairless from chemotherapy, against the hot sun of the Northern West Bank. She stands on a road choked with traffic, gripping a sign that reads "Down with the occupation" in Arabic, vigorously waving on honking cars. The Israeli military had closed off the Jenin refugee camp and Arna, unable to stand idly by, had left her hospital bed against doctor's orders to organize a demonstration—one of her last.*

Arna's fierce solidarity with Palestinians, and particularly with the people of Jenin, had begun decades earlier. She was born in 1929 to Lithuanian parents in Rosh Pina, a Jewish moshava[18] in the Upper Galilee which neighbored the Arab village of Ja'ouni. After the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, Arna wrote, Rosh Pina "grew and developed, whereas Ja'ouni [was] erased from the face of the Earth." That violent contrast stayed with her and transformed her: Arna had been raised ardently Zionist and fought as a teenager in the underground Palmach unit in the 1948 Arab–Israeli War.

By 1967, Arna had begun to protest the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and had moved to Nazareth after marrying Palestinian Christian and communist party secretary Saliba Khamis. She was imprisoned multiple times for her activism.

The work for which Arna is most beloved began during the First Intifada in 1987. Israeli authorities had shut down Palestinian schools in the West

18 a Zionist agricultural settlement.


"If I stop... it'll be for two reasons only: Either the project finishes me or I'll die before the project is finished."
-Arna Mer-Khamis

*By Madison Rubenstein* 22

Bank for two years in response to the uprising, and Arna—who was fluent in Arabic and a teacher with degrees in special education and art therapy—went to the Jenin refugee camp to join Palestinian women's committees offering home-based learning to children. The effort bloomed into an organization called In the Defense of Children under Occupation/ Care and Learning, and Arna mobilized volunteers from Haifa, where she now lived, along with adults from the camp to offer educational sessions grounded in art and theater for Jenin's children.

Once schools reopened again in 1990, Care and Learning established four Children's Houses, creating oases of calm and creative expression for 1500 children amidst the particular brutality of occupied Jenin. Outside of the walls of the Children's Houses, Arna organized support for children criminalized by the military courts and became a beloved, honorary member of many of their families.

When Arna was awarded the Right Livelihood Award—often known as the alternative Nobel Peace Prize—in 1993, she used the prize winnings to establish the Stone Theater in Jenin, offering the city's children the dignity and platform of a real stage. Israeli forces destroyed the theater in the invasion of the Jenin refugee camp in 2002, but it was reborn as the Freedom Theater and earned international renown under the direction of Arna's son, Juliano Mer-Khamis.

*Scene: Arna stands on the stage of the Stone Theater, looking out at hundreds of Jenin families. It is the fifth anniversary of Care and Learning, and she has already lost her hair. "Learning and freedom are not just words," she bellows in Arabic as the crowd cheers. "They are the basis of struggle. There is no freedom without knowledge. And there is no peace without freedom. Peace and freedom are bound together! Bound together!"*

Arna died of cancer in 1995. Her story was captured in the documentary *Arna's Children*, made in her memory by her son Juliano.

## Salim Halali

*By Hadar Cohen*

Salim Halali, born in Annaba, Algeria in 1920, was a musical prodigy who became a seminal figure in Arabic popular music. Despite having no formal music training, Halali's natural talent and charisma propelled him into the spotlight, making him one of the most beloved singers of his time. He was one of many prominent North African Jewish artists in the music scene including Zohra El Fassia, Layla Murad, and Habiba Messika.

At the tender age of 14, Halali stowed away on a boat bound for Marseille, eventually making his way to Paris in 1937. He began performing in Flamenco clubs, where his unique blend of Arabic melodies and Western influences quickly won him a devoted following. His recordings with the label Pathé in Arabic, French, and Spanish became immensely popular across North Africa and beyond, cementing his status as a musical icon. He was known as the "King of Shaabi," an Egyptian title that reflects his immense popularity among everyday people.

Shortly after Halali's arrival in Paris, Nazi Germany invaded France, and his safety was at risk due to his Jewish and queer identity. He was among the many Jews saved by the Muslim community that sheltered their Jewish kin in The Great Mosque of Paris for protection. Si Kaddour Benghabrit, the mosque's founder, was a great admirer of Halali's music and took extraordinary measures to protect him. Benghabrit provided Halali with a false birth certificate identifying him as Muslim and arranged a fake grave for his grandfather in the mosque's cemetery to further secure his safety.

Because of this remarkable Muslim–Jewish solidarity, Halali survived and went on to continue his music career. After the war, he thrived, establishing the renowned cabaret Folies Ismailia in Paris, followed by The Serail. Halali's presence in the vibrant cultural scene was well known, and his relationships and romantic life were part of the city's social fabric. In 1949, Halali relocated to Morocco, where he opened one of the biggest

cabarets in North Africa at that time, Le Coq d'Or. It attracted wealthy Moroccans and dignitaries, including King Farouk of Egypt. Tragically, Le Coq d'Or was later destroyed in a suspected antisemitic attack.

In the 1960s, Halali performed in Jerusalem and shouted from the stage "Long live the Arab nation!" This political statement, coupled with his openly gay identity, sparked a strong backlash from local Zionist groups. They threw things at him and eventually expelled him from the city. He never returned to occupied Palestine and instead remained devoted to his North African roots and Jewish identity through his music career.

Halali was a prominent figure in Algerian music and Arabic Andalusian classical traditions. His repertoire featured a distinctive and bold expression of his identity, especially through his gay-themed songs. "Sidi Hbibi" (Mister Love) is one of Salim Halali's most notable songs, celebrated for its bold and evocative portrayal of his romantic life. The song stands out for its use of masculine pronouns, directly addressing a lover in a manner that was both personal and defiant.

Halili's career spanned several decades, during which he gained recognition for his unique musical style that combined traditional Arab and Andalusian music with Western influences. He was openly Jewish and queer, embracing and expressing his identity through his art despite facing discrimination. Halili remained a celebrated music star, hosting lively and lavish gatherings until his retirement. Towards the end of his life, he moved to Cannes with his partner, Pierre, and their two pet tigers. Halili passed away in 2005, leaving behind a lasting legacy in the world of music.

*By Micah Bazant* 26

# Night 4 ✵ נֶצַח / *Netzach* / Endurance

Abraham and Evelyne Serfaty & Alberto Moreau

## Abraham & Evelyne Serfaty

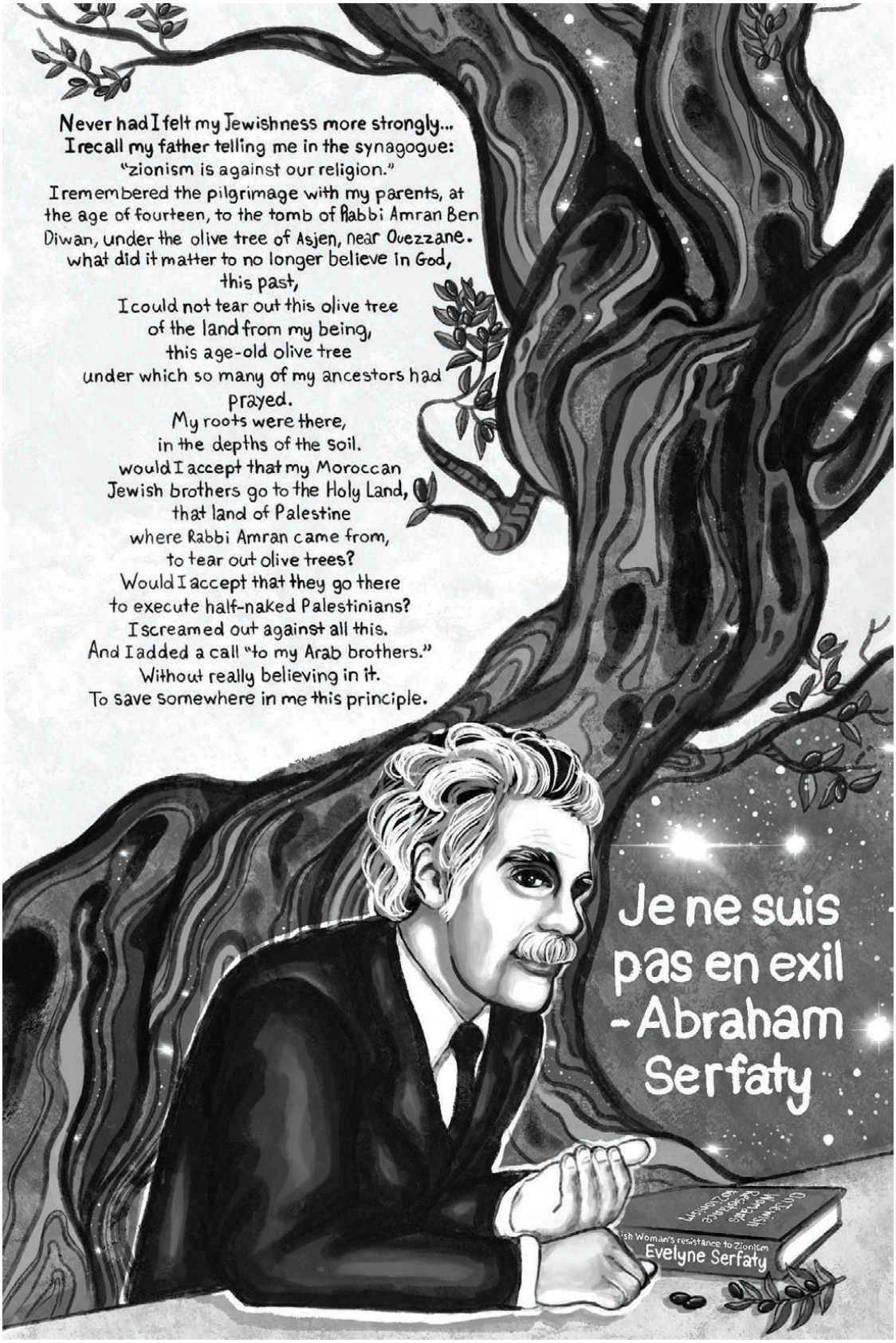
*By Adam Brunell*

Abraham Serfaty (1926–2010) was a Jewish Moroccan anti-Zionist, communist, and self-proclaimed "revolutionary militant." As a teenager and young adult, Serfaty resisted the French colonial occupation of Morocco, and was arrested and exiled to France for his participation in the Moroccan communist movement.

Once Morocco had won its independence, he was able to return to his homeland, where he joined the resistance against the brutal rule of King Hassan II. Serfaty condemned the authoritarian government's violence against dissidents, Zionist international politics, and aims to annex the Western Sahara. During this period, Serfaty co-founded the underground Marxist-Leninist political party Ila al-Amam ("Forward" in Arabic) and joined the editorial board of Souffles ("Breaths" in French), a leftist literary journal founded by self-described "literary guerillas."

The monarchist regime arrested and tortured him in the early 1970s for his communist activities. While imprisoned, he wrote Prison Writings on Palestine and Anti-Zionist Struggle and Arab Revolution, and became the longest actively serving political prisoner in Africa after Nelson Mandela's release in 1990. Upon being freed in 1991, Sefarty was exiled again, and continued his writings in France. Following the death of King Hassan II, he returned to his homeland of Morocco in 1999, where he lived until his passing in 2010.

Throughout his life, Abraham Serfaty was a staunch supporter of the Palestinian resistance, and condemned Zionism in the strongest terms, calling it "above all a racist ideology." Sefarty saw Zionism as a fundamentally European philosophy, designed to erase the flourishing of Arab Jews: "Zionism is contrary to the glorious history, spanning more


Never had I felt my Jewishness more strongly...
I recall my father telling me in the synagogue:
"zionism is against our religion."
I remembered the pilgrimage with my parents, at
the age of fourteen, to the tomb of Rabbi Amran Ben
Diwan, under the olive tree of Asjen, near Ouezzane.
what did it matter to no longer believe in God,
this past,
I could not tear out this olive tree
of the land from my being,
this age-old olive tree
under which so many of my ancestors had
prayed.
My roots were there,
in the depths of the soil.
would I accept that my Moroccan
Jewish brothers go to the Holy Land,
that land of Palestine
where Rabbi Amran came from,
to tear out olive trees?
Would I accept that they go there
to execute half-naked Palestinians?
I screamed out against all this.
And I added a call "to my Arab brothers."
Without really believing in it.
To save somewhere in me this principle.
Je ne suis pas en exil
-Abraham Serfaty
sh Woman's resistance to zionism
Evelyne Serfaty

than a millennium, of Arab and Mediterranean Judaism, which was historically forged in symbiosis with Islam within the Arab civilization." Instead, Serfaty took pride in his Moroccan and Arab identity, famously declaring, "I am not in exile!"

Serfaty felt equal pride in his Jewish identity, and viewed his anger toward the genocidal Zionist settlers as an affirmation of his Jewishness:

> "Never had I felt my Jewishness more strongly. When I was ten, I recall my father telling me in the synagogue: 'Zionism is against our religion.' I remembered the pilgrimage with my parents, at the age of fourteen, to the tomb of Rabbi Amran Ben Diwan, under the olive tree of Asjen near Ouezzane. What did it matter to no longer believe in G!d, this past, I could not tear out this olive tree of the land from my being, this age-old olive tree under which so many of my ancestors had prayed. My roots were in there, in the depths of the soil. Would I accept that my Moroccan Jewish brothers go to the Holy Land, that land of Palestine where Rabbi Amran came from, to tear out olive trees? Would I accept that they go there to execute half-naked Palestinians? I screamed out against all of this. And I added a call 'to my Arab brothers.'"

Evelyne Serfaty, Abraham's sister, was a powerful anti-Zionist revolutionary herself, as well as a genderbreaking activist in her time. She is the only woman whose name appears on Moroccan Jewish anti-Zionist petitions or police surveillance records, a testament to her political ingenuity and fortitude. She died a martyr, refusing to disclose her brother's location under police torture, and later dying in 1974 of complications from the injuries she endured.

Today, we can honor the siblings' revolutionary spirit by heeding Abraham's cry: "Rise up against your oppressors, against the racist and criminal Zionist rulers! For peace, fraternity, justice, for dignity, arise!"

***Project Note:*** *We couldn't find enough photos or detailed information about Evelyne Serfaty to honor her on her own. The artist Ayeola Omolara Kaplan represented Evelyne through the symbol of a book in the portrait with Abraham. The image of the book pays homage to Evelyne's work and expresses the artist's wish to learn more from her legacy.*

*By Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo* 30

## Alberto Moreau

*By Felipe Ventura*

Alberto Moreau was born in Salonika in 1897 and dedicated his life to fostering an internationalist working-class movement. Raised in the Sephardic community of Salonika under Ottoman rule, he was active in the socialist movement from an early age and was briefly jailed in 1915 for his opposition to World War I. He emigrated to the US in 1916, where he quickly became a leading figure in the Communist Party, advocating for the unity of workers across national and racial lines.

Moreau believed that Zionism, by promoting Jewish nationalism, fractured the unity of the international working class. For Moreau, the liberation of Jewish people was inextricably linked to the liberation of all oppressed peoples through a global worker-led revolution. Throughout his writings, Moreau emphasized the role of imperialism in conflicts. He argued that anti-Arab racism, fueled by imperialist propaganda, was a significant obstacle to understanding the true causes of colonization in the Middle East.

Moreau's involvement in labor organizing and anti-imperialist activities extended through the 1940s and 1950s. He was a key figure in establishing a network of worker parties across the Americas. In New York, he was actively involved in interracial labor organizing, advocating for the rights of both Black and Boricua workers. His leadership with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union ensured better working conditions and fair wages for all union members. As the secretary of the Anti-Imperial League, he focused on issues like Puerto Rican independence and the broader anti-imperialist struggle in the Americas and always highlighted the interconnectedness of global liberation movements. In various labor strikes, he put his life on the line to support workers' rights and to promote solidarity within the labor force.

In 1977 Alberto passed away and was interred alongside the Haymarket Martyrs. His memory continues to inspire those who believe in the revolutionary power of international solidarity.

# Night 5 ✡ הוֹד / *Hod* / Humility

Moris Gabbay & Marek Edelman

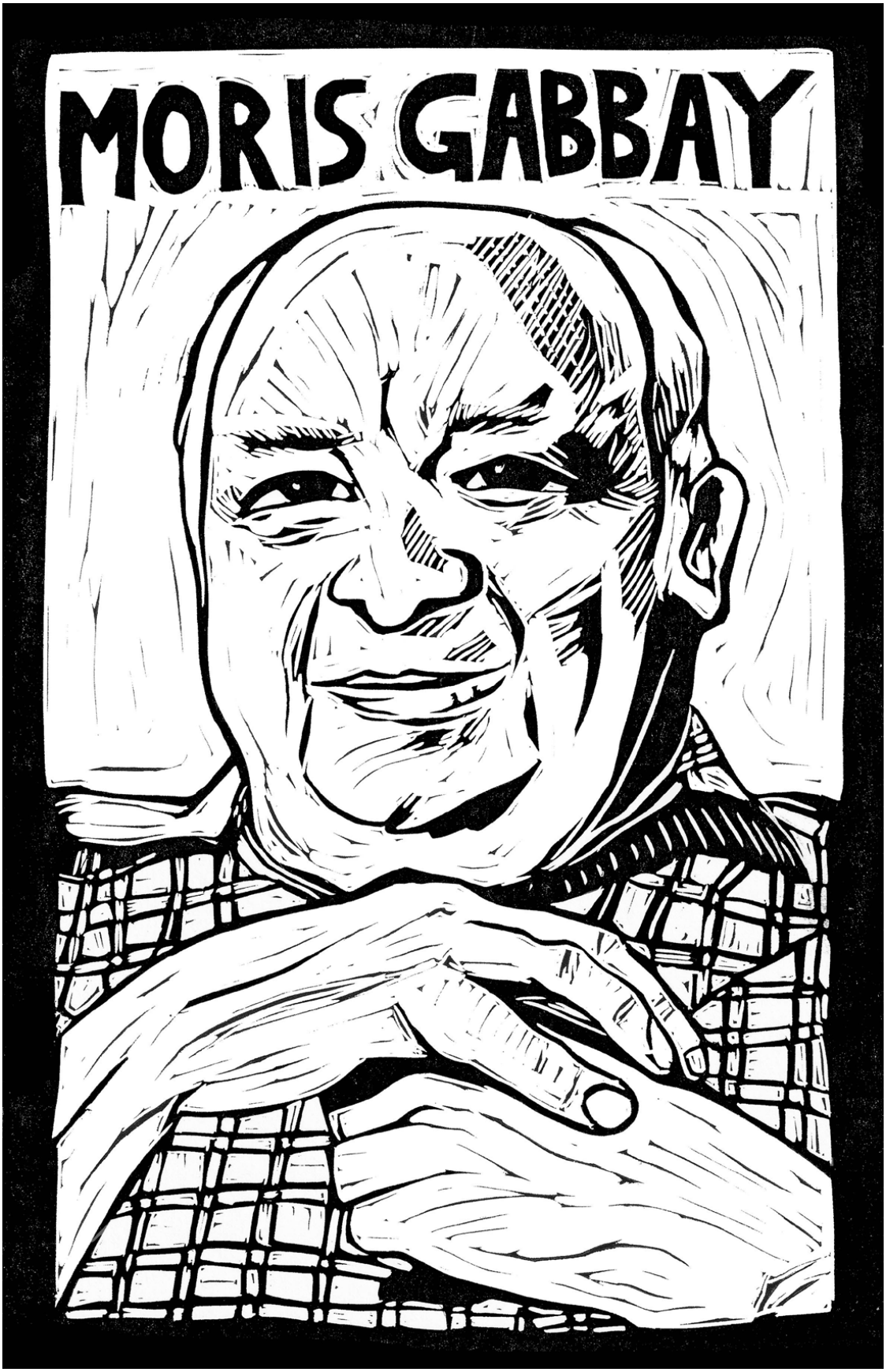
## Moris Gabbay

*By Nesi Altaras*

Born in Istanbul on February 27, 1922, Moris Gabbay was a leftist throughout his life. His father was an agronomist trained in Jaffa, Palestine and in France, and was a leader in Istanbul Jewish communal institutions. His mother was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. His childhood home was a multilingual space where his parents spoke to each other in Ladino, Turkish or French to him, and Bulgarian, Italian, and Greek to various visitors. His was the first generation of Jews to speak Turkish natively and as a young man, he insisted on the national language to his family.

He attended the English-instruction Robert College of Istanbul along with some Jews and some classmates who were sympathetic to Nazis, at a time when many feared a Nazi invasion. Early on, he recognized that despite linguistic assimilation, Jews and other non-Muslims were unable to work in the public sector or get equal treatment in public life. He saw the enlistment of non-Muslims into forced labor in the military and the creation of a tax on non-Muslims meant to transfer property, which also harmed his family. One uncle unable to afford the racist tax, was sent off to forced labor and exchanged letters with Gabbay.

It was in this context that Gabbay read leftist works at his school library and got exposed to new ideas. At home, politics were not discussed much and Zionism was not present, seen as contravening their national loyalty as Turks. In 1946, he began frequenting the new Turkish Socialist Party, and later the Turkish Socialist Worker and Peasant Party, which counted Habil Amato, a Jewish dentist, among its founders. When he started university, he organized with other young leftists to form a progressive student union and publish a periodical. Among the student leaders, he




33 *By Roan Boucher*

and Kegam Iskol, an Armenian, were the only non-Muslims. In December 1946, less than two months after it began publishing, *Free Youth* was shut down along with most of the opposition press. He continued to work in socialist circles despite police repression. His home was searched in November 1950, and he was detained in April 1951. He spent 3 days jailed in solitary confinement before being sent to prison along with his comrades. Following these ordeals, he felt shunned by the Jewish community. After his release, former friends would cross the street to avoid him.

Throughout the 1960s, he worked for the new Turkish Workers' Party, becoming the leader of the Beyoglu branch and attending its congresses across the country. Some Jews would warn him that his party was 'antisemitic' because of the party's attitude towards Israel but he did not think so. Gabbay perceived a critical stance on Israel to be a natural extension of its anti-imperialism, which he supported.

Alongside his political work, he worked in many jobs, including at the Grand Bazaar, where he used a storefront to sell textiles made by his imprisoned comrades and send them money. One of these comrades was Turkey's most famous poet Nazim Hikmet. In the 1960s, he began working at the United Nations and was sent to a series of African countries as an employee of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), starting with Chad in 1970. He later worked in Senegal, Mozambique, Mali, and Guinea-Bissau until he retired. Returning to Turkey, he was among the founders of the Nazim Hikmet Cultural Center carrying on the legacy of his friend. He died in 2022 at 100.

## Marek Edelman, Guardian of the Jewish Graves

*By Shelby Handler*

After the war, you learned how the heart works.

After the uprising, you escaped through the arteries of Warsaw, through sewers to the Aryan side.

After the escape, you lived quietly behind a wall until the entire city revolted. After you were orphaned, the Bund was your *second mother* and raised you.

After three weeks of fighting, you insisted, *We were beaten by the flames, not the Germans.*

After you were born, the records were lost and the borders redrawn.

After you died, you were swaddled in your second mother's flag and sung her oath.

After the war, you refused to leave for Palestine.

After the war, you were the last Jewish fighter left in Poland.

After everyone died or fled, your tenderness matched your fierceness: *Here is where my people are buried.*

After the uprising, you penned its bravery: the three weeks of *bullets rained down on the hated German helmets, the hated German chests.*

After a lifetime, you resisted its exceptionalism: *People have always considered shooting the highest form of heroism. So shoot we did.*

After the war, you stayed—tending the tension that pushes blood through the body.

After the war, you healed the chests of the grandchildren of Poles who fought beside you.

After the war, you knew: *All the others who were sent to Treblinka... They had to deal with certain death.... It was easier to die fighting than in a gas chamber.*

After ‘48, Israel erased you from the uprising, refused to translate your Polish into their invented Hebrew, with new words for soil they’d barely touched.

After your wife and children left, you stayed. Grazing your palms across your comrades’ graves, the clovers growing towards your still-warm skin.

After everything, you knew the whole of what home is: *Warsaw is my city. It is here that I learned one must always take care of others. It is also here that I was slapped in the face just because I was a Jew.*

After the war, you picked a plum, juice ran down your wrists and you noticed how it was not blood.

After medical school, your hands shook more in the hospital than they ever did in combat.

After ‘67, you asked the Israeli press, *What Jewish people are we talking about?*

After each winter, you offered yarrow, lilac, foxglove to the ghetto, to all those you served beside.

After your letter to the Palestinian resistance, the Israeli press boycotted you.

After you were born, thunder bellowed from a far-off forest.

After you were born, a century of blood loomed.

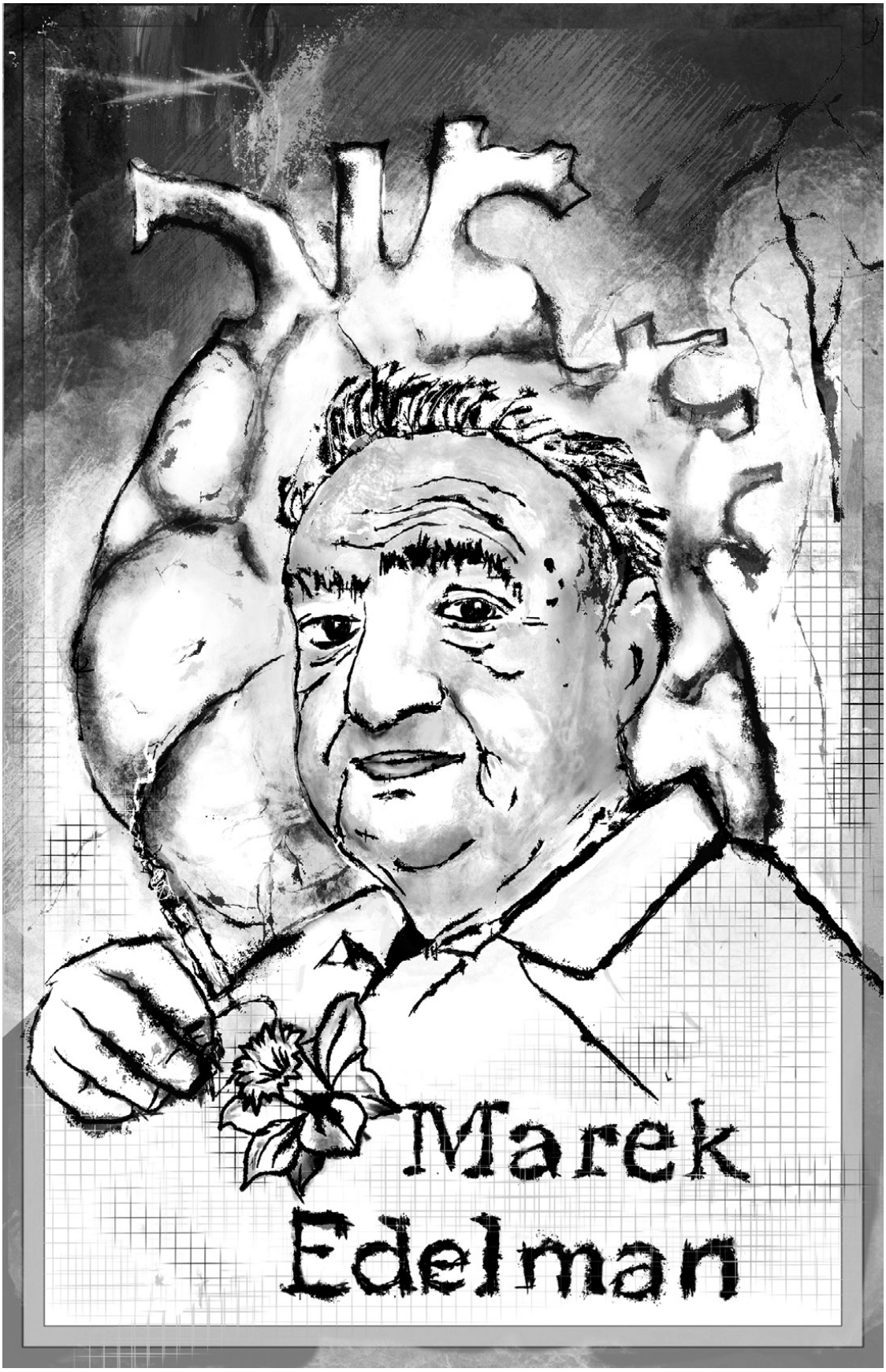
After the war, you whispered to a birch, promising to stay.

After the war, chamomile still grew near the gate, nettles still stung your ankles.

After everything was gone, you planted your feet in truth: *The Bundists did not wait for the Messiah, nor did they plan to leave for Palestine. They believed that Poland was their country.*

After you died, we learned your name and held it tightly, whispering it to the birches we grow beside.

After you died, after you were carried through the city, after you were buried, after the buildings were razed, after the streets were re-named, your ghetto stayed at the heart of the city, the heart of the heart, where the blood came from and where the blood went.




37 *By Elliot Kukla*

# Night 6 ✡ יְסוֹד / *Yesod* / Foundation

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz & Emma Goldman

## Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz

*By Temim Fruchter*

*Doikayt* is the Yiddish word for *hereness*. A word to express that we as Jews can and must practice care, mutual aid, and work for justice right where we are. That we can and must root deeply in local work, and our local communities the world over. The word was used by the Jewish Socialist Labor Bund as an alternative to the *thereness* of Zionism. A word that encapsulated the call to remain present where one already was, and to continue to build thriving and just Jewish communities in our vast and beautiful and messy diasporas.

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz—longtime activist, first director of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, and author of several foundational books about social justice, coined a term that has its roots in *doikayt*: Diasporism. In her book *The Colors of Jews: Racial Politics & Radical Diasporism* she writes: "Diasporism offers a place we might join with others who value a history of dispersion; others who stand in opposition to nationalism and the nation state; who choose instead to value border crossing." Kaye/Kantrowitz conceived of this as a "deliberate counter to Zionism," which requires that instead of being *here*, all of our energy is directed to some colonial power over *there*.

Diasporism is an invitation. As Kaye/Kantrowitz writes, it is "no casual invitation to perpetually wander." Instead, it is an invitation to take root. It is an invitation to solidarity. Diasporism, she writes, "cherishes love across the borders—and let's face it, every reaching out beyond one's own body is a border crossing." Diasporism, then, is an invitation to reach out beyond one's own body. It is an invitation to build community with one another; to find safety in mutual aid and in collective care, instead

39 *By Miranda Cohen*

of lauding one place or one empire as a fantasy of Jewish salvation. And even as it is an invitation to hereness, it is also an invitation to continue working in solidarity across borders and great distance, even as we remain accountable to wherever we call home.

Kaye/Kantrowitz herself practiced diasporism with love and integrity. She was a Jewish lesbian feminist essayist, poet, and professor, and her decades of activism were deeply informed by empathy and solidarity. She co-chaired of the New Jewish Agenda Task Force on Anti-Semitism and Racism and was the first director of Jews for Racial and Economic Justice (JFREJ) in New York City (from 1992 to 1995), after which she served on the JFREJ board. The books she wrote and edited explore with deep care and nuance ideas of multi-racial Jewish communities, Jews and race and class, gender and sexuality, and Jewish radical history, among many other things.

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz gave us many gifts, including the gift of diasporism. Today, let us ask: What does *here* mean for us? What does *home* mean for us? What can it look like to love across borders? Can we imagine a thriving diaspora that is built on a beautiful *hereness*, instead of a *thereness*? Can we draw inspiration and wisdom from Kaye/Kantrowitz as we imagine a world past Zionism; a world where we wander with intention, and where our diasporic roots are strong?

41 *By Sarah Day*

## Emma Goldman

*By Maura Finkelstein*

It may be difficult, if not impossible, to glean from my writings my own definitive stance on Israel and Zionism. I admit that, 100 years later, my own views are very different. History has changed me. I write this from the grave (believing not in an afterlife or a spirit, I am not a ghost but instead an idea) to say that, had I understood that Jewish emigrants to Palestine would become Zionists, that Zionism would become the State of Israel, I would not only oppose it (the ideology and the State), but indeed dedicate my entire life to stopping this monster before it could scorch the earth and decimate an entire people, the Palestinian people, who – like all people – deserve to live free from State oppression and violence.

I died in 1940, eight years before Zionists expelled Palestinians and stole their land - the Nakba of 1948. Two years before my death, I wrote "I have for many years opposed Zionism as the dream of capitalist Jewry the world over for a Jewish State with all its trimmings, such as Government, laws, police, militarism and the rest. In other words, a Jewish State machinery to protect the privileges of the few against the many." This, I should say, is the heart of my politics. I am an anarchist and believe, more than anything, that the State is at the center of our collective suffering. I may have once believed that Jews had a right to move to Palestine, to work the land, to call it their own. But I did not imagine that would result in the creation of a State that would use the genocide of one people (European Jewry) as justification for genociding another (the Palestinian people). In my final years, I watched with horror as Nazi Germany took power in Europe, my thoughts and my words were forged in this violence. Everything I say and do is driven by an abhorrence towards injustice. I did not know how one injustice would birth another.

Do not look for heroes in history, we will only disappoint you. Instead, use us as tools for your own revolution. I was not always right, but I was often not wrong. The State is at the heart of all that ails us and therefore the State of Israel is an inherent evil, a site of oppression and violence. I

wrote, “The State, ecclesiastical and secular, served to give an appearance of legality and right to the wrong done by the few to the many.” The Palestinian people have the right to live in peace, on their land. The State of Israel has no rights, is not just, should not exist. “The State has no more existence than gods and devils have. They are equally the reflex and creation of man, for man, the individual, is the only reality. The State is but the shadow of man, the shadow of his opaqueness, of his ignorance and fear.”

In the midst of Nazi Germany’s monstrous extermination, I imagined a way out for Jews being persecuted, the way I was persecuted. I imagined Palestine as a safe place for Jews because I did not imagine how Zionists, as colonialists, would co-opt Jewish pain in pursuit of Palestinian land and Palestinian death. I was wrong. We can live in peace, as neighbors – Jews and Palestinians. Surely, we always have. But we cannot construct a State as our salvation, no one can - that State can only become a tool for violence against the masses, wielded by the few. This is why I am now, even in death—after 76 years of Nakba—an unapologetic anti-Zionist, this is why I condemn the State of Israel and call for Palestinian freedom, from the river to the sea.

# Night 7 ✵ מַלְכוּת / *Malchut* / Dignity

Roni Margulies & Hedy Epstein

## Roni Margulies

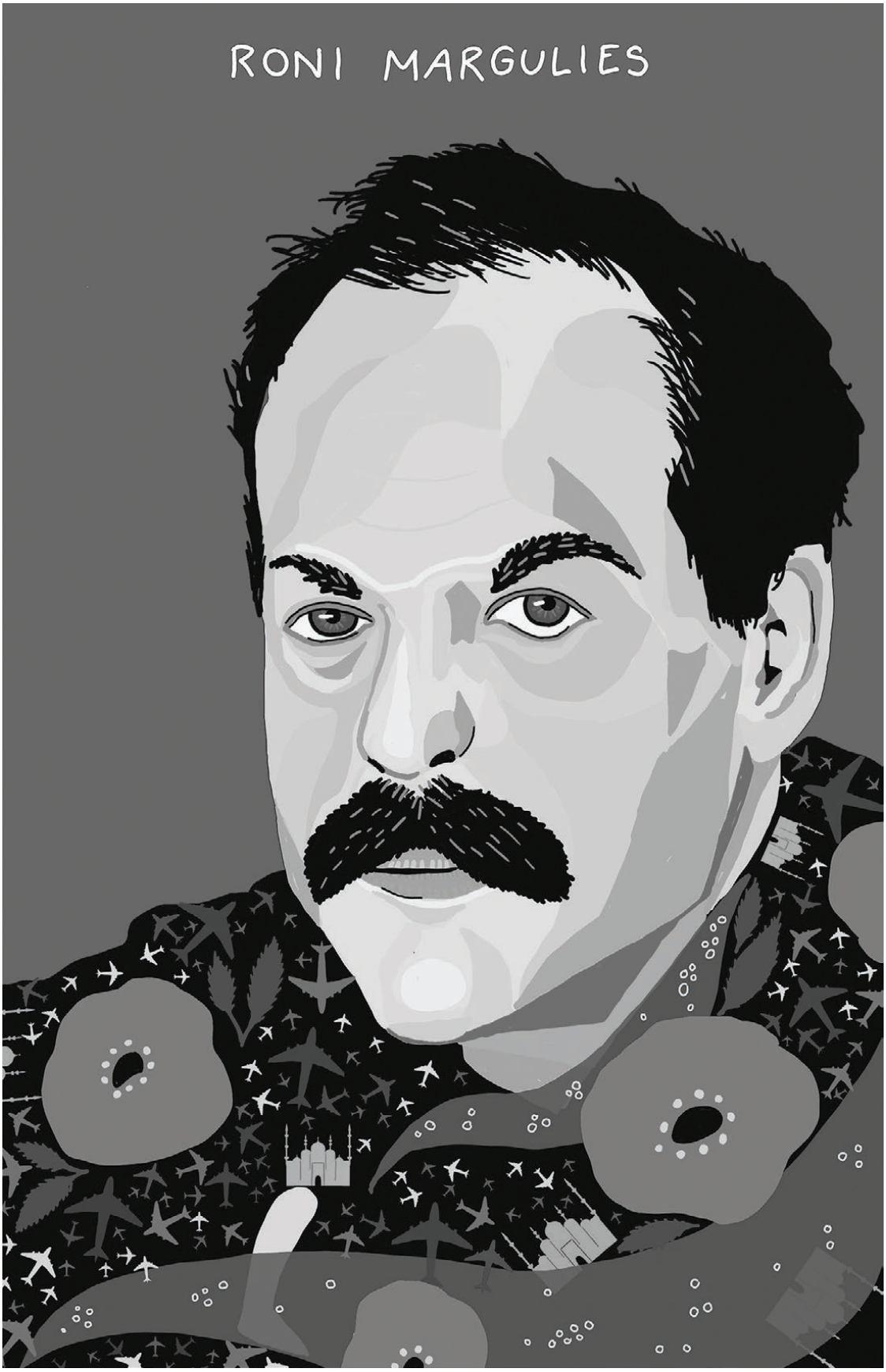
*By Shula Etta Pesach*

Roni, what a legacy you have left us: in verses of poetry, as a voice for justice, with examples of "living concerned..." as a "non-Jewish Turkish Jew." I remember you with your own words...

Unable to "tell Pesach and Yom Kippur apart," you came into this world and into your work a "Turkish Jew"—born to Asheknazi and Sephardi families in Istanbul, you grew up with Polish, Russian, Ladino, French, Turkish, and Hebrew. As you note, "This is not to imply that all Jews [of] Turkey are atheists on the verge of complete assimilation; far from it" — for "Jews go wild on Sundays."

You are a child of diaspora: assimilation and adaptation, conflict and difference, pluralism and multiculturalism. "What is he? A hard code to crack." "No one knew the house of my birth, the school of my youth... I was alien to them all, me, Roni." Because, as you said, "the walls separating the many ethnic and religious communities of Istanbul had become weaker and much more porous ... and they crumbled and collapsed completely in the years when I traveled the distance between being a child and a young man." As your education and livelihood brought you to London, "...the country changed, and the world changed, and we changed."

Yes, "all anyone remembers is that times were hard, war was all around, and death never far." But you were a voice for equity and justice. You taught us to question home, homeland, belonging. Across generations, across watersheds and ancestries, we ask with you now: "Am I... out of place here? Why am I more at home on water than when I have both feet




45 *By Jay Smith*

planted firmly on some land? And why... do I still expect these questions to be answered?"

It is this "...insatiable intellectual curiosity" and "living concerned" which you brought to your Jewishness that we inherit—embodying an identity and legacy open to change, to transformation. Even though "...the scars never healed fully [and] the traumas were never completely overcome..." you believed in a liberation for all. You taught us to question the violence of Zionism: "What was it we were looking for and why look for it?" Condemning militarism, occupation, and apartheid—not to mention imperialism and white supremacy —you were clear: "the State of Israel is illegitimate... in any terms: legal, moral, ethical, and in every sense."

You asked, "Can [we] repair the past?" And the question echoes to this day. We call on you in the repair of haunted histories. We call on you to reimagine Judaism beyond exceptionalism. We call on you to repair the horror that is the Nakba—we call on you to repair the broken imagination that is settlement.

As an organizer, political analyst, and public intellectual, you spoke out for Palestine. Yet, your poems speak of and from the everyday: "buy[ing] bread and cigarettes," "a favourite blue pullover... thinned at the elbows," how the "old woman appeared at the entrance of the underground station." the simplicity of "brew[ing] tea nightly at eleven." With observation of the textures of place and attention to specificities of life, you "give voice to [the] hurt" but also to the beauty.

And so you remind us: there is a world worth fighting for. Alongside our political clarity and impassioned analysis, it is our "epic intention" and rootedness in the particulars of life that animates all our struggles. It is attending to the world "with strange joy" that empowers our "political ability to imagine a future other than the past."

## Hedy Epstein

*By Helen Betya Rubinstein*

*The FBI opened a file on Hedy Epstein in 1954, when her name was found in another subject's address book and she was investigated, without conclusive findings, for connections to the Communist Party. The next 400+ pages in the file, all from the 1970s, detail complaints Epstein filed against racist housing practices in St. Louis, Missouri, where she was active in the struggle for housing justice for many years. (Days after her 90th birthday in August 2014, Epstein would be arrested alongside other protestors in Ferguson, wearing a STAY HUMAN T-shirt from Freedom Flotilla II's 2011 effort to break the maritime blockade on Gaza.) Epstein's file concludes with a brief investigation concerning her involvement in the International Solidarity Movement's 2003 protest against the construction of a fence near Mas'ha in the West Bank.*

*Here, I fill the FBI's redactions with Epstein's own words, quoted directly from testimonies and talks available online, and edited and condensed to fit here.*

My name is Hedy Epstein. My maiden name was Wachenheimer. I was born on August 15, 1924, in Freiburg, Germany. That's in the Black Forest, but I lived in Kippenheim… It's true that sometimes in school I was called a dirty Jew, and I was deeply disturbed by that. But my father, who I think was quite a dreamer, would hold out some beautiful thing that would happen in the future… And I wanted very much to believe what my father said.

I got a permit to enter England on January 19, 1939. I almost didn't want to go because my bicycle couldn't go. There were 500 children on that transport, and I was 14 at the time. And I remember my parents putting me on the train and the thought—that maybe I'm not my parents' real child, that this was just an opportunity for them to get rid of me. But as that train pulled out of the station, I could see the tears and the expression on their faces—"My God, those people really love me. That's why they sent me away." They gave me life a second time.

The guiding words of Holocaust survivors are "remembering" and "never again." But remembering is not enough. It also has to have a present and a future perspective.

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authorities and told them that they were
in the wrong place at the wrong time.

In 1982, I heard of the Sabra and Shatila massacre. And as I learned and understood more, I began to speak out against the policies and practices of the Israeli government and the Israeli military and what they're doing to Palestinians and Palestinian land.

I visited the West Bank five times since 2003. I made a commitment to the Palestinians that I met, all of whom asked, "When you go back to the US, please, tell the American people what you have seen and what you have experienced."

I know what it's like to be awakened at night by a knock on the door; to have your home ransacked; not to be able to attend school; to have your parents arrested; not to know if or when they will return; to hear planes overhead, waiting for them to unload their daily cargo; to be orphaned at a young age. Because I know all this, because it is also the Palestinian experience, I cannot stand idly by.

In some ways I feel sorry for the Israeli soldiers who are in Palestine. They're victims too—because when you are the perpetrator you're going to have to live with what you've done.

SECRET

49 *By Elissa Martel*

## Letters to Our Ancestors

*Prompts for Nightly Ancestral Connection*

### Night 1: Letters of Compassion for our Ancestors

- When thinking of anti-Zionist ancestors, how did love emerge through their conviction, their activism, or their work?
- Write a love letter to an ancestor. How does their love and compassion inspire your work today? If you are stuck, try using poetry or a line from an ancestor's work, or this zine, as inspiration.

### Night 2: Letters of Discipline for our Ancestors

- What is the role of discipline in our anti-Zionist freedom struggles in the past and today?
- What ideological struggles may have emerged for our ancestors that inform your guiding principles and politics?

### Night 3: Letters of Harmony for our Ancestors

- How do you work toward finding connection and harmony with ancestors?
- What do you want to ask them or seek guidance on?

### Night 4: Letters of Endurance for our Ancestors

- The fight for liberation is a long road, and we need endurance to be in the movement for the long haul. What endurance did our ancestors have that you want to call upon for yourself? What is that prayer?
- What is their enduring impact on you and/or the Jewish world?

### Night 5: Letters of Humility for our Ancestors

- As the Black Lives Matter movement has taught us, we aim for low ego / high impact in our organizing. Do you see humility as part of our ancestor's path?
- How do you honor your worth, while also working towards humility in your anti-Zionist work?

### Night 6: Letters of Foundation for our Ancestors

- What don't you know about your ancestors that you wish you knew?
- We are in community with our ancestors, present, past, and future. How can you draw on these foundations and connections for support in hard times?

### Night 7: Letters of Dignity for our Ancestors

- How did our ancestors, as diasporic people, relate to concepts of dignity beyond nationhood?
- What does dignity feel like in your body when you feel connected to ancestry?

## Project Curators & Organizers

**Pushcart Judaica** was created by Ollie Emmet Schwartz out of a need for easily accessible, ethically sourced Judaica. Pushcart offers an online store, pop-up markets across the so-called US and Canada, educational craft workshops, and retreats. The name "Pushcart" is inspired by the 11,000 pushcart peddlers of the early 1900's on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

**Micah Bazant** is an artist and organizer who works with liberation movements to reimagine the world. micahbazant.com | IG: @micahbazant

**Making Mensches** was created by two queer, anti-Zionist, white Ashkenazi Jews, Elana Lipkin and Jessie Sander, in 5781//2020 and is a home for anti-Zionist Jews. We focus on community building through education and spirituality with an explicitly anti-Zionist framework. We host a Jewish education podcast, facilitate radical Jewish educational experiences, and bring together anti-zionist Jewish spiritual communities.

## Artists and Writers

**Adam Brunell** is a genderfree abolitionist and anti-Zionist Jewish activist based in Atlanta, Georgia. They work with local organizers building an antiracist, pro-Palestine community group called HayatChaim ("life" in Arabic and Hebrew) centered around ritual, cultural learning, and healing.

**Ayeola Omolara Kaplan:** Through depicting the intersections of identity, class, and spirituality, I hope to contribute to the moving canon of revolutionary surrealist art. I create with the belief that art can be weaponized as self-defense against an anti-truth culture plagued by unhealed generational trauma. ayeola.org | IG: @ayeolaomolara

**Dori Midnight** is a community care worker, ritual artist, organizer, writer, and deep listener oriented towards collective healing and liberation. dorimidnight.com | @dorimidnight

**Elissa Martel** is a queer artist and librarian who delights in flowers, memes, books, and snacks. She is also the Art Editor for the Radical Jewish Calendar. talkingfemmes.bigcartel.com | IG: @talkingfemmes

**Elliot Kukla** is a rabbi, artist, author, and activist. His practice of radical spiritual care brings together these two streams of expertise with his lived experience of being a trans, non-binary, disabled, anti-zionist Jew.

**Felipe Ventura** (he/him) builds community networks. He lives with his partner and children in xučyun (Huichin) the home territory of the Chochenyo speaking Lisjan Ohlone people in the East Bay. fvntr.com

**Hadar Cohen** is an Arab Jewish scholar, mystic and artist whose work focuses on multi-religious spirituality, politics, social issues, and community building. She is the founder of Malchut, a spiritual skill-building school teaching Jewish mysticism and direct experience of God. hadarcohen.me | IG: @hadarcohen32

**Helen Betya Rubinstein** writes, teaches writing, and other writers. She is at work on several books-in-progress, including FEELS LIKE TROUBLE (forthcoming 2026). helenbetya.com | IG: @helenbetya

**Jay Saper** is an artist, writer, translator, and organizer who lives in Brooklyn, New York. pashkevilpress.com | IG: @pashkevilpress

**Jay Smith** (they/them)'s artwork reconstructs traditional Jewish ritual for a contemporary audience, and creates protective spells for trans bodies and spirits. They currently reside on Nipmuc/Pocomtuc land in so-called Florence, MA with their partner, Clare, and two cats, Gene and Charlie. mmmjaysmith.com | IG: @mmmjaysmith

**Joey Ramona** is a tattooer, visual artist, tired punk and sissy Yid. IG: @joeyramonatattooer

**Julia Peck** is a linguist pursuing a doctorate at UC Berkeley focused on the revitalization of Judeo-Spanish/Ladino. She organizes with JVP-Bay Area and Extend, which runs programming to introduce young North American Jews to Palestinian and Israeli anti-apartheid activists the West Bank and East Jerusalem. sites.google.com/berkeley.edu/juliapeck

**Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo** is an artist, abolitionist, educator, storyteller, cultural worker and person of multitudes. They are committed to the lifelong fight for a Free Palestine! lukazabranfmanverissimo.com | IG: @bluekaza

**Madison Rubenstein** is a visual artist from Bloomington, MN who relates to art-making as a necessary tool of adaptability, one which helps them survive in the world as a life-long disabled person. They paint to imagine new futures for themselves and other disabled people, where all needs are met and they can not only survive but flourish. MadisonElyseRubenstein.com | IG: @_rubenstein

**Maura Finkelstein** is a writer, ethnographer, and former associate professor of anthropology. She is the author of "The Archive of Loss: Lively Ruination in Mill Land Mumbai" (Duke University Press: 2019) and her other writing has appeared in Anthological Quarterly, City and Society, Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology Now, Post45, Electric Literature, Allegra Lab, Red Pepper Magazine, The Markaz Review, and the Scottish Left Review. maurafinkelstein.com | IG: @dr_mauraf

**Miranda Cohen** is a graphic designer and illustrator based in Philadelphia/Lenapehoking. Her work centers on themes of nature, whimsy, anti-Zionism, and design as a tool for social change. IG: @mirandacohenmakes

**Nesi Altaras** is a PhD student in History focused on Jews in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey and an editor of Avlaremoz, a Turkish website on antisemitism and Jews. His writing has published in Turkish, English, and Ladino. IG: @nesialtaras

**Nicki Green** is a transdisciplinary artist working primarily in clay. Her sculptures, ritual objects and various flat works explore topics of history preservation, conceptual ornamentation and aesthetics of otherness. nickigreen.org | IG: @nickigreenstudio

**Ray Packer** is a multimedia artist, muralist, and organizer who has dedicated her life to weaponizing words and images in the service of struggles for justice. Ray's work has been featured in venues both large and small: on millions of smart phone screens, in exhibitions at the Los

Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, on billboards across Philadelphia, as part of the world's longest mural in the LA river, and on signs and banners held at protests and wheat-pasted on walls throughout the country and the world. IG: @ gaychelquacker

**Roan Boucher** is a movement facilitator and printmaker living in North Carolina with his two small children and two small dogs. pollinatorpressart.com | IG: @pollinator_press_art

**Rose Jaffe** is a visual artist, with mediums spanning mural painting, printmaking, and illustration. She is dedicated to harnessing the power of art to spark conversation, build connection, and create social change. rosejaffe.myportfolio.com | IG: @rose_inks

**Sarah Day** is an Ashkenazi Jewish artist and educator, working to imagine alternative Jewish futures through the Judaica she designs for her brand, Sarah Day Arts. She currently resides in Seattle with her husband and tiny dog. sarahdayarts.com | IG: @sarahdayarts

**sarit cantor** is a non-binary artist, queer ritualist, prison abolitionist and off-the-derech femme. they try to place land, relationships and ancestors at the centre of all the work they do. they live their freaky little life in tkaronto, where they love laughing with their friends and are fighting for a free Palestine with everything they've got. IG: @aclothcalledwitness

**Shelby Handler** is a writer, translator, and organizer with Jewish Voice for Peace. shelbyhandler.com | IG: @shelbeleh

**Shula Pesach** is a Jewish educator, community ritualist, and trans theologian. Shula serves movements for flourishing and collective liberation through her work with Weaving Earth Center for Relational Education, as the Program Director for Taproot, and as the founder and director of B'yameinu Beit Midrash. byameinu.squarespace.com.

**Temim Fruchter** is a queer nonbinary anti-Zionist Jewish writer who lives in Brooklyn, NY. Her debut novel CITY OF LAUGHTER is out now on Grove Atlantic. temimfruchter.com | IG: @both_and_yes

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